

House Republican Press Release

February 7, 2006
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Williams Introduces Binding Arbitration Reform Proposal



HARTFORD- State Representative Sean Williams (R-Watertown) has announced that he has introduced legislation which would reform Connecticut's binding arbitration process under the Municipal Employee Relations Act (MERA) and the Teacher Negotiation Act (TNA). The proposed legislation would ensure that a town or city's budget reserve is not considered a part of

the town's "ability to pay" an arbitrated award for teachers or other municipal employees. Williams' proposal comes less than a month after the legislature's bi-partisan Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRI) completed a nearly nine-month study of the issue and made fourteen recommendations on ways to reform the process.

"Most reasonable people recognize how important it is for a town or city to maintain a Rainy Day Fund," Rep. Williams said. "If a town or city has an severe financial emergency, they will have some money to fall back on hopefully without raising taxes. To allow arbitrators to consider this money as a function of a town's ability to pay doesn't make much sense, which is why the Program Review and Investigations Committee recommended this reform."

Williams emphasized that unlike most legislative committees, the PRI is "truly bi-partisan" in the sense that there are equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats as well as equal numbers of Senators and Representatives. The bi-partisan nature of the Committee, he argued, gives "even greater validity" to the proposal.

"This proposal is simple yet could have far-reaching positive implications for local property taxpayers," Williams said. "Yet, even still, no municipal employee can argue with a straight face that their rights are being eroded by making this proposal law. It simply makes good fiscal sense."